

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**Tuesday, Feb 19, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 PM in the Webster Room of the University Center.

**Faculty Senate Members Present:** Matyas Buzgo, Amy Erickson, Mary Jarzabek, Carl Smolinski, Raymond Taylor, Trey Gibson, Chris Hale, Kevin Krug, Harvey Rubin, Robert Leitz, LaWanda Blakeney

**Faculty Senate Members Absent:** Mary Hawkins, Marjan Trutschl, Larry Garrison, Emre Celebi

A motion was made by Senator Blakeney to approve the minutes of the Jan 28, 2013, meeting. This was seconded by Senator Smolinski. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**President Jarzabek** stated that there is change in the wind and that it is an exciting and scary time. She emphasized that there is a lot of work to be done and that we have received assurance from our administrators that everyone's voices will be heard and considered. She suggested that we need to be implementers of change, and that when we get our brains together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. She continued to state that we are all family and that we must be united and voice our concern, ideas, and enthusiasm for LSUS.

**Administrators' Reports:**

**Chancellor – Dr. Paul Sisson** announced that increasing enrollment is our number one priority this year and in years to come. He said that we are increasingly dependent on tuition and fees and are already a private university. Thus, he said we need to be open to change, and he stressed that if we do not change, we will not survive. Ten years ago, we had 4500 students on campus. Now, while we still have 4500 students at LSUS, 3500 of them are on campus while 1000 are dual enrollment. He announced that despite dual enrollment students doing well and despite the fact that they turn into great students at LSUS, they do not bring in the same tuition and fees that on campus fulltime LSUS do. Based on this, LSUS is actually down by ~1000 students, and with state appropriations down by over 50% since 2008, if we do not change, we will not survive. He said that other universities, especially in LA, are on the same path and must figure out how to adapt to survive and that this is the reality of higher education nationwide.

To that end, he announced Phase I of a series of upcoming changes. Phase I consists of a new contract that was 2 years in the making with Academic Partnerships (AP) which will involve them hosting and advertising a select number of our 100% online graduate programs. Courses offered as part of these programs are to be offered in six eight-week terms throughout each year. This transformation is complete and the first classes will start in May. Dr. Sisson expressed his thanks for what has been accomplished and to all those involved including Financial Aid, Academic Affairs, and Adult Education.

This then raised the question of whether we can devise other opportunities to attract students and make gains regardless of the involvement of AP. Dr. Sisson stated that they started exploring the idea of offering some of our other programs in non-traditional ways. As such, and also part of Phase I, he announced that our Bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Mass Communications will be offered as 100% online degrees using an eight-week format starting Fall 2013. For the Fall 2013-Spring 2014 year, five eight-week terms will be offered for these programs (including two terms in the fall and spring, where the first session starts when the regular semester does and the second session ends when the second session would, and one in the summer at the start of our usual A session). To offer these programs in this way, we may have to add some classes and repackage a few general education courses. Every office may have to do something to make this work.

Phase II consists of a bigger, more comprehensive change in the default calendar starting in Fall 2014, where LSUS will switch from using the semester system to a system based on eight-week sessions for all courses

(exceptions may be made for certain courses). A session will consist of seven weeks of classes followed by a four-day final exam week. Thus, there will be five to six new terms a year (one or two will take place in the summer). AP courses are based on six sessions. As part of this new approach, some programs could be 100% online and others could be on-site. This shift will involve careful consideration of everyone on campus, including our students. Dr. Sisson stated that there are several benefits to switching to eight-week sessions. First, this system has a built-in 'second chance' or 'do over' semester, which our students have requested. Students will be able to retake a course in the second session if they had trouble with it in the first session and were unable to complete it. This will be especially true for general education courses (for instance, MATH 121 will be offered every semester). Secondly, for students that are able to stay on track (such as our dual enrollment students who on average score four points higher on the ACT and have higher retention rates), they may be able to finish their degree earlier. It is expected that students will take two classes/session. With six sessions per year, students will likely complete at least 12 classes/year, or 36 classes over 3 years. Given that a Bachelor's degree is 40 courses (120 hrs) students will be nearly done after three years. If students take over 2 courses in a given session, they will be completed in three years. Thus, the way we schedule courses is important. Dr. Sisson said that if we schedule them with creativity and an innovative spirit, students should be able to finish in three years. The third benefit is that we will be able to charge students per credit hour. Currently, students are not charged tuition for credits over twelve hours (they are charged a small fee), yet many students take more than twelve hours in a given semester. Changing this would require legislative approval and Dr. Sisson stated that even the Board of Regents does not envision that such a change will occur. With an eight-week format however, most students will likely not take more than twelve hours (they typically will take six to nine hours).

Dr. Sisson said that the entire campus (faculty, staff, students) will be asked for their input on this idea and that focus groups will be formed. **Senator Leitz** then announced new scholarships provided by the Noel Foundation, including ten \$4,000 scholarships in the first year, followed by 20 \$4,000 ones in the following year. Both Dr. Sisson and President Jarzabek thanked the Noel Foundation for their contribution.

**Senator Buzgo** raised concerns about the proposed eight-week sessions. He stated that laboratory bench skills are an important part of teaching and an eight-week session may not provide adequate time to do so. He used the time it takes for model organisms to grow as a potential problem with teaching under the new schedule. Dr. Sisson agreed that the change may not be appropriate for all classes and said that it is possible some courses may be able to span two sessions, and if this comes across as confusing to students, some other similar solution may be able to be used such as leaving a course as a 15 wk course. Dr. Sisson pointed out that internships and student teaching require lots of time outside the classroom and it may be hard to compress them. President Jarzabek said it may be possible to award 1 and 2 hrs for a 3 hr course that is spread over two sessions. Dr. Sisson said that even faculty load may be on the table and that rather than there being summer compensation that instead there would be compensation beyond total required load.

Dr. Sisson said that neither the LSU Board of Supervisors (BoS) nor Jim Purcell, the Commissioner of Higher Education, raised objection to the idea. He added that Carolyn Hargreaves was supportive and that if we continue on the LSU 2015 path, each campus will need to have a distinguishing feature and the eight-week term could be ours. Purcell said that he is excited and enthusiastic about the plan, and he has the deep realization that we need to do things differently for the next several years. Dr. Sisson said that because we are likely to continue to face cuts every Fall, we must change.

**Senator Krug** repeatedly asked what other schools have switched to eight-week sessions and to 100% online programs. Dr. Sisson replied that several universities across the country work with AP. He also stated that Colorado College runs six week blocks and students take one class at a time. He then said by adopting such a schedule we would be ahead of the curve. **Dr. John Vassar** said that he is starting a list of schools that run mini-sessions. Senator Krug asked why not make a gradual change to which Dr. Sisson replied that it is his hope that this will get us ahead of our competition. He said he is not averse to best practices but rather is interested in LSUS being seen as an innovator. Senator Krug asked why we should have to take the risk (as

opposed to another campus). Dr. Sisson replied that we are not being told to do this but are choosing to do so. Senator Krug asked why not adopt the quarter system like LA Tech, to which Dr. Sisson replied that we want to get ahead of Tech.

**Senator Gibson** stated that BPCC has eight sessions of variable length (from a traditional semester to four-week sessions). **Dr. Tim Winter** said that it would be helpful to talk with faculty members who already work with AP to make the transition smoother. Regarding the eight-week sessions, Dr. Buzgo added that frequently he sees a bi-modal distribution in student grades and his concern is for the students in the lower half of the class. He is concerned that a greater percentage of students will struggle more than they currently are. Dr. Sisson said that he has experience teaching 15, eight, and four-week courses in math and that student success was higher in the shorter sessions where students were taking fewer courses simultaneously but were immersed in the ones they were taking. He suggested that during a 15 week semester, students were more prone to forget what they learned from one week to the next. Senator Gibson added that he has taught COMM 135 during intersession and found that students scored and learned better than during the semester. **Dr. Lynn Walford** was in agreement. **Dr. Terry Harris** raised the concern that reading eight or nine 800 pg books during an eight week term will be very challenging for students. He also said that compressing a course in composition also will be challenging for students and teachers alike. **Mr. Brennan** and Dr. Harris brought up the difficulty in grading student assignments in this time frame. Senator Gibson said that teaching two classes will reduce the grading load. He then raised the question as to whether we can reexamine caps on student registration. Dr. Sisson said that we need to keep the same student outcomes but that we may have to change the way we teach and the kinds of assignments we expect our students to complete.

Dr. Leitz inquired about the University of Phoenix in Shreveport. Dr. Sisson said he thinks for-profit institutions may be suffering financially. Students were initially attracted to these universities but their great cost and lack of quality is now deterring them. Dr. Sisson thinks that students are going to start opting more for public universities that offer courses online and in non-traditional formats. Dr. Leitz asked how we are going to maintain quality while doing more and whether adjuncts will be employed. Dr. Sisson said he is not sure about the adjuncts. **Dr. Mary White** brought up that many students are non-traditional students who take night courses. Teaching in eight-week sessions would translate into a faculty member having to teach two three-hour classes each week for one course. She does not think this will be popular among faculty or students. She continued by saying that this will likely force any courses into a hybrid structure where one three-hour session is online. Dr. Sisson said that there are any possibilities about how this can be dealt with. Dr. Harris likened forcing our courses into this framework is like fitting a square peg into a round hole. He suggested that doing so will not account for what we do and value as educators. Dr. Sisson offered that there is no law that stipulates a timeframe in which we must or should teach our courses. He said that the ability to offer it in any format is desirable. Thus, we need to consider teaching in new ways and redesigning the courses we teach. Senator Gibson suggested that because students will have fewer courses, they will be able to go into more depth in a subject and may have greater focus. Senator Buzgo again raised concern about students being able to be successful in a shorter time but stated that regardless of whether it is better to offer courses over a shorter or longer timeframe, we need find a way to capture students that struggle earlier (in the same way we attempt to do this with our four-week grades). **Senator Taylor** suggested we move on with the agenda. Prior to moving on, Senator Gibson stated that it would be helpful to create transition teams to address concerns and to make this transition occur smoothly. President Jarzabek added that she too was going to make this suggestion. Thus, she proposed the formation of an ad-hoc transition committee to field questions, collect data, address concerns and solutions, bring ideas to administrators, and report to the Faculty Senate. Senator Buzgo moved on this item and it was seconded by Senator Gibson. While the motion passed, **Senators Rubin**, Leitz, and Krug were against it. Senator Gibson stated he would be interested in serving on the committee.

**Academic Affairs – Provost John S. Vassar** thanked everyone for their comments regarding the eight-week plan and that there are short and long-term concerns that will have to be addressed. He said that we have been dealing with a lot over the past three years (explosive growth at BPCC, Tech merger, LSU 2015), but over the long-term we must be concerned with sustainability. He believes that no matter what name is posted at our

front entrance, there will still be an institution here and faculty will be teaching. Next, he addressed student credit hours (SCHs). He stated that these are our life support. He also said though that we need to start paying more attention to student learning outcomes. He then addressed massive online open courses (MOOCs). Top institutions in the country such as Stanford, Rice, and UPenn have put courses online at no cost to the institution across a number of subjects. These courses can generate as many as 100,000 students per class. He stated that at some point, a university will say that they will accept credit for these courses. While we can choose to accept credit or not, once some institution does, there may be pressure to do so. As of Feb 7, five MOOCs were recommended for credit. Dr. Vassar said he would work on getting a list of these courses. These courses have the ability to get students hooked on attending a university, and they have the ability to reshape higher education. Another university that may be competition is Western Governors' University. They were started 7-8 years ago, are private, and offer online courses geared toward providing great flexibility. They are a threat because they offer affordable education, unlike the University of Phoenix. While we offer a four year degree for ~\$21,000, they offer it 100% online for ~\$23,000. He thinks that combining the rigor and quality of our courses in an online format plays to our strengths.

Regarding the QEP, proposals were submitted and Dr. Vassar stated that we would soon be able to vote for a topic online. Dr. Vassar also asked **Dr. Brian Salvatore** to give a presentation to the Faculty Senate on his suggested topic of problem-based learning (PBL). Dr. Salvatore promoted greater guided mentoring and facilitation in the classroom in lieu of more traditional teaching formats. He suggested that student weaknesses today include a lack of self-awareness, time management skills, and analytical thinking. Dr. Salvatore suggested that we need to adapt our teaching to their weaknesses. He learned more about problem-based learning while visiting with Dr. Hal White at the University of Delaware's Center for Problem-based learning. Part of this concept involves the infrastructure of classrooms. PBL-ready classrooms offer more space for students to interact (i.e., tables with chairs as opposed to high lab benches). Also, part of PBL involves breaking down larger sections into subsections, increasing the ability of students to collaborate.

**Business Affairs – Mr. Michael Ferrell, CFO**, stated that we lost our basketball game earlier in the week. He also announced the upcoming Faculty and Staff Appreciation night. Regarding funding, he stated that there will be a reduction in state appropriations; however, the Executive budget was not yet available for higher education. President Jarzabek stated that the reduction will likely be a couple hundred thousand dollars.

**Student Affairs – Vice Chancellor Dr. Randy Butterbaugh**, announced that financial aid will now be disbursed electronically. He said that there will be a change in the way we award it. **Mr. Eddie Samhan** and **Ms. Betty McCrary** recently made a presentation to the Student Government Association (SGA) to make students part of the process. Dr. Butterbaugh said that as we communicate with students we want to do so with one voice.

Mr. Samhan stated with the way financial aid is currently disbursed, students are not able to use the bookstore at the start of the semester. The change will be that students will be able to use their aid a week before schools starts and 2 weeks into the semester. As far as dropping courses and refunds are concerned, during the first five days, students will get a 100% refund, a 60% refund during the five next days, and a 40% refund during the next five days. Thus, by the 15<sup>th</sup> class day, all decisions will be made regarding refunds. Ms. McCrary stated that when checks have been issued on the first day, fraud has been an issue where students collect financial aid and then do not return. In addition, if students drop from 12+ hours to 9, it is often a hardship for them to pay the money back. To avoid these issues, the date of disbursement is being delayed until after the first day of classes.

**LSUS Development – Ms. Laura Perdue, Executive Director, LSUS Foundation**, stated that the Foundation would be holding a strategic planning meeting to discuss increasing scholarships and public relations. She commented that the landscape of philanthropic giving is changing in relation to higher education, and said that from the community perspective, she appreciates forward thinking.

## Old Business

- a. **Chancellor Search Committee Report – President Jarzabek** stated that they would be forming community focus groups to aid in the process. She said that she would be meeting with Dr. Gustavson in the next day and put together information on this subject.
- b. **Transition Advisory Team Sub-committees – Mr. Shelby Keith** announced that he attended a general planning meeting and that there would be a more focused meeting this week (LSUS Feb 17 10am-2pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the library) where committee members develop ideas of how this transition will proceed. The subject of the meeting will be commercialization and technology transfer. He invited us to attend. He also said it would be streamed through Adobe Connect. Dr. Vassar then mentioned that the Academic Advisory Committee meeting was rescheduled for Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and that he is still accepting comments/ideas regarding the transition.

## New Business

- a. **Eight-week sessions** – President Jarzabek stated that this was covered earlier in the meeting. Dr. Harris raised the question how the new schedule will affect student life. Dr. Butterbaugh said that this will be part of the discussion as we move forward. President Jarzabek said that we must do it right and the logistics are yet to be worked out. Senator Buzgo asked whether this can be made known to students. Dr. Sisson stated that he already met with the SGA and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them seemed shocked and excited and 5-6 of them were not excited. President Jarzabek suggested that rather than imposing our opinions on them, we ask them questions on how they feel about the change.

## Observations and Concerns

- a. **Books on reserve** – On behalf of Senator Trutschl, **President Jarzabek** reminded us of the recommendation that we place textbooks on reserve at the library, especially for those students who experience delays receiving their financial aid.
- b. **LSUS Spirit Day** – **President Jarzabek** reminded us of LSUS Spirit Day. If you wear the LSUS logo on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed day of the month, you get 10% off at the bookstore (on all items but textbooks) and at the Port. For faculty, this translates into a 20% discount as we already receive 10% off.
- c. **Presidential Score Card** – **Senator Gibson** announced our rankings as part of the Presidential Score Card which were just released. He stated that we were cheaper than other universities/community colleges in LA (including BPC), had a lower load default rate, and had a higher graduation rate than LSUA but lower than LA Tech and LSU-BR. Ms. McCrary announced that our default rate is 7%, which is down from last year.

There was no further business. Senator Gibson moved that the meeting be adjourned. This was seconded by Senator Buzgo. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Erickson.